

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 11-15, 21-25, 31, 32, and 34-40 are currently pending. Claims 1, 11, 21, 31, and 32 have been amended; and Claims 39 and 40 have been added by the present amendment. The changes and additions to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification, for example, by page 6, lines 18-27; page 22, lines 1-22; and FIGS. 1 and 4. The changes and additions to the claims do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Final Office Action, Claims 1, 11-15, 21-25, 31, 32, and 34-38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2010/0050078 to Refuah et al. (hereinafter “Refuah”) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0034631 to Julliard et al. (hereinafter “Julliard”). Applicant respectfully traverses the outstanding rejection.

Applicant’s amended Claim 1 is directed to an information transmission apparatus, comprising:

reception means for receiving a plurality of taste information that represent respective tastes of a plurality of users from a plurality of terminal apparatuses of the plurality of users;

storage means for storing the received plurality of taste information and group information in association with the plurality of users;

search means for receiving, from a first user, an introduction request including search key information ***that is a subset of taste information of the first user, the search key information being selected by the first user concurrently with generating the introduction request***, and searching for a second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored in association with the plurality of users in the storage means;

retrieval means for retrieving at least taste information or group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user, the retrieved taste information or group information not being associated with the first user; and

transmission means for transmitting the retrieved taste information or group information associated with the second user to a terminal apparatus corresponding to the first user.

Regarding the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), the Final Office Action apparently acknowledges, and it is respectfully submitted, that Refuah fails to disclose the search means, retrieval means, and transmission means of Claim 1. Rather, the Final Office Action cites paragraphs [0005] through [0007] of Julliard for such teachings.

In this regard, Julliard is submitted to disclose that a recommender system provides personalized recommendations that take into account similarities between people, based on their user profiles. Julliard is further submitted to disclose that recommender systems learn users' preferences and recommend items to users by first matching users to each other, by way of user profiles.

However, Applicant respectfully submits that Julliard does not disclose that search key information is a subset of taste information of the first user, let alone that the search key information is selected by the first user, as in Applicant's amended Claim 1. Further, Julliard does not disclose the search key information is selected by the first user concurrently with generating the introduction request, as recited in Applicant's amended Claim 1.

Rather, Applicant respectfully submits that Julliard discusses a recommender agent that finds matches between new items and user preferences (and) automatically sends relevant and high quality information to people as it is found. *See, e.g.*, paragraph [0006] of Julliard. It is submitted that, at most, Julliard discloses that social filtering, *i.e.*, matching items to people by first matching people to each other, is accomplished using statistical algorithms and profiles of a collection of users. *See, e.g.*, paragraph [0007] of Julliard.

Applicant respectfully submits that Julliard fails to disclose or render obvious a “search means for receiving, from a first user, an introduction request including search key information *that is a subset of taste information of the first user, the search key information being selected by the first user concurrently with generating the introduction request*, and searching for a second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored in association with the plurality of users in the storage means,” as recited in Applicant’s amended Claim 1.

At least insofar as Julliard fails to disclose or render obvious the claimed search key information that is a subset of taste information of the first user, the search key information being selected by the first user concurrently with generating the introduction request, recited in Applicant’s amended independent claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that Julliard fails to disclose or render obvious the claimed retrieval means.

Applicant further submits that Refuah also fails to disclose or render obvious at least the amended features of Applicant’s amended Claim 1. The Examiner asserts paragraphs [0021] and [0036] of Refuah as disclosing search means for receiving an introduction request including search key information, as previously recited in Claim 1. The cited portions of Refuah are submitted to disclose storing a persona and/or an identification of a person on a removable media and using the (stored) persona outside the Internet (*e.g.*, in automated stores), for customizing selection and/or offerings to a customer. The cited portions of Refuah are further submitted to disclose automatically updating a personality by updating a mood based on one or more sites visited by a user, the number of sites visited, the contents of the sites, services purchased, information downloaded, actions performed at the sites, and/or based on a predefined or adaptive time-line based function.

Applicant respectfully submits that Refuah fails to disclose an introduction request that includes search key information that is selected by the first user, let alone that the search

key information is selected by the first user concurrently with generating the introduction request. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that Refuah “search means for receiving, from a first user, an introduction request including search key information ***that is a subset of taste information of the first user, the search key information being selected by the first user concurrently with generating the introduction request***, and searching for a second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored in association with the plurality of users in the storage means,” as recited in Applicant’s amended Claim 1.

Thus, no matter how the teachings of Refuah and Julliard are combined, the combination does not teach or suggest at least the search means and retrieval means of Claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 1 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably defines over any proper combination of Refuah and Julliard.

Independent Claims 11, 21, 31, and 32, although differing in scope and/or statutory class, patentably define over Refuah and Julliard at least for reasons analogous to the reasons stated above for the patentability of Claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 11, 21, 31, and 32 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over any proper combination of Refuah and Julliard.

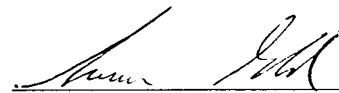
Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 11, 21, 31, and 32 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over Refuah and Julliard.

The present amendment also sets forth new Claims 39 and 40 for examination on the merits. No new matter has been added. It is respectfully submitted that these more detailed features are not disclosed or suggested by Refuah and Julliard.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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